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AN ENGRAVER OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

BY EDWARD T. HEYN.

Illustrated from the works of Daniel Chodowieski, in the possession of his great-grandson, George C. Bunsen.

THE world admires the man who, with an indomitable will, rises above obscurity and unfavorable surroundings, and finally reaches the desired goal in his chosen career. An example of such a character may be found in Daniel Chodowieski (pronounced "Kodov-yetski"), undoubtedly the greatest engraver of the last century. No artist of his time can be compared with him in productivity, in prolificness of invention, and indefatigable industry. He was born in the city of Danzig, on October 16, 1726. His father was a merchant, and in his leisure hours gave the young Daniel instructions in drawing. This instruction, although somewhat deficient, proved to be very beneficial, for the interest of the boy was aroused. In the year 1740, his father died and an aunt continued the lessons. His work consisted in copying engravings which, though by no means perfect, nevertheless strengthened his imaginative powers, and aided in training his eyes to the relation of forms and perspective. His productions were sent to an uncle in Berlin, who sold them for a small sum. Chodowieski's mother did not desire her son to become an artist, so he secured a position with a widow, who kept a grocery in the town. Though his work in the store was very fatiguing, his love for drawing could not be suppressed, and after receiving permission to retire, he would go to his room and draw until he fell asleep, or the candle went out. Sundays he went to church



PARADE OF THE ARMY BEFORE FREDERICK II. AT POTSDAM.



FREDERICK II.

turned to his mother. Here he continued his drawing, and his productions were sent to his uncle in Berlin. This uncle asked Chodowieski to come to Berlin, and he went in the year 1743. In those days Berlin was not the city of art that it is now; Dresden was the art centre, and the artists of Germany congregated there to study, before going to Italy. Berlin was small, its churches contained nothing remarkable, and the royal castles, which contained some art treasures, were not open to young artists. Chodowieski was, therefore, compelled to copy from the prints of unimportant artists.

He fully recognized that to become a great artist, thorough instruction was essential, and as his position became daily more unsatisfactory, he concluded to enter his uncle's business. He became the bookkeeper of the firm, and performed this duty faithfully for many years. However, he could not forget his art entirely; his leisure hours were de-

regularly, but paid more attention to the interior of the edifice than to the service. He would look at the pictures and use the cover of his bible to draw upon, so that no one could see him. His first models were the men and women who came into the store to buy. His difficulty in execution can be imagined, as he had no idea of perspective, and lack of time prevented him from finishing his drawings. Some years later, he returned to Danzig, and when these drawings were shown him, he said, "Miserable as they are, I can see how I have improved in the course of eight years."

After a year and a half the widow gave up the business, and Daniel re-



FAREWELL OF CALAS FROM HIS FAMILY.

voted to study under the guidance of a painter who was an excellent teacher, and was of much assistance to the young man. The young aspirant made such great progress that he concluded to leave his uncle's business, which he did soon after. He called this his second period.

He supported himself by painting on miniature snuff-boxes, many of them in enamel, the designs being copied from the prints of Watteau and Boucher. Several of Chodowieski's productions fell into the hands of a celebrated painter, named Pesne, who was influential in securing a permit for the young man to study the works of Pesne and Watteau in the royal castle at Potsdam. Through the assistance of Pesne, Chodowieski entered a school for young artists, where he worked industriously as only genius can. He never imitated the mannerisms of his teacher, but his drawings were a continual study of forms, shadows, light, and perspective.



OPPOSITION TO STAMP ACT.

While attending social gatherings, he took a position in the background, where he could survey and sketch the whole company. If disturbed in his work, he would be satisfied with an outline sketch which he would fill in and finish at home.

In the year 1756, he made his first attempts at engraving. The Seven Years' War had begun, and the name "Frederick" was in everybody's mouth, for Prussia's king had become a national hero. It was the beginning of the "Storm and Stress" period; a feeling of unity, of patriotism was growing in divided Germany. German literature, which before the Seven Years' War hardly existed in name, was now budding forth with youthful strength. Lessing was writing his "Minna von Barnheim," in which the great Frederick is the central figure. It was natural, therefore, that the young artist should take his subjects in what was of interest to his contemporaries. His engraving of the King of Prussia at a bound placed him at the head of his profession. The king was attracted by the freedom, the vigor, and the grace



BIRTH OF CHRIST.

of the conception, and was much pleased by the picture. The engraving "Parade of the Army before Frederick the Great," which the artist executed soon after, also attracted a great deal of attention. Frederick appears sitting in a stooping position on a spirited charger, with the historical "knotty cane" in his right hand, surrounded by his generals.

Through "Les Adieux de Calas" he became the most celebrated artist of his time. This picture was first painted in oil, and at the desire of many of the artist's friends was engraved on copper. Calas, a Protestant merchant living in Toulouse, France, had raised a family of three

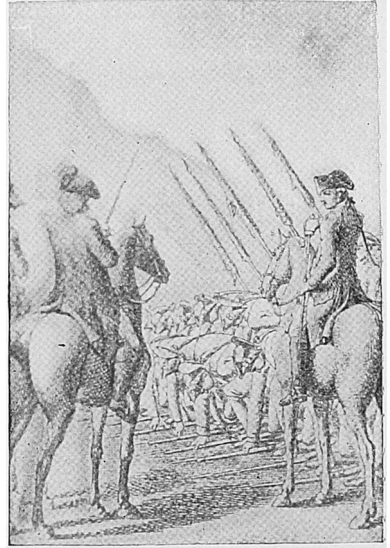
sons and three daughters. One of his sons became a Catholic

through the influence of a servant who had been in the family for thirty years. Another son was of a melancholy turn of mind, and delighted in reading works on suicide. He was found one day dead in his father's storehouse, where he had hung himself. The news spread through the town, and an angry crowd assembled before the merchant's house. They said that the young man had taken his own life because his father had opposed his change of religion. The officers of justice who arrived on the scene were in sympathy with the mob



BATTLE OF LEXINGTON.

and arrested Calas and his family. All believed in his guilt, and he was condemned to be tortured and his bones broken on the wheel. He was executed March 9, 1762, and his last words were: "I die guiltless, my judges have been deceived, but Christ, who was himself guiltless, suffered a death even more terrible." A storm of indignation spread throughout Europe at the news of this example of bigotry and intolerance. Voltaire, then at the height of his fame, went to Versailles, and laid the matter before the Council of State. Calas was declared innocent, and the Parliament at Toulouse was ordered to punish all those who were responsible for Calas's



SURRENDER OF BURGoyNE AT SARATOGA.

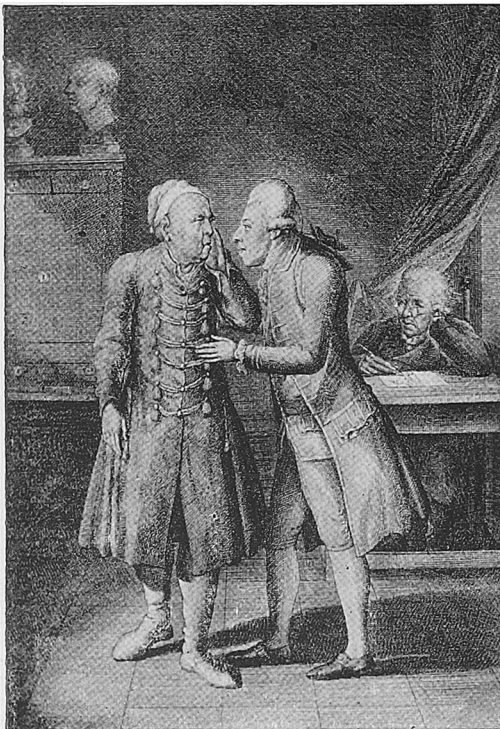


THROWING THE TEA OVERBOARD.

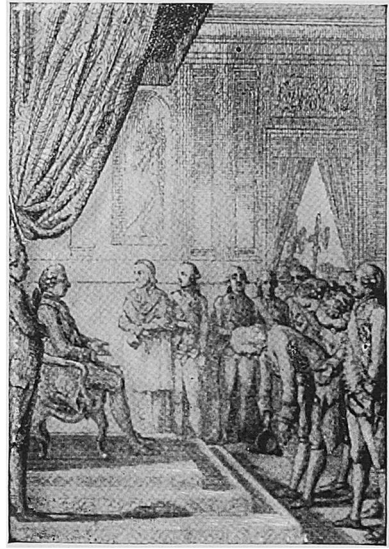
death. Chodowieski's picture represents in a most pathetic way the misery of this unfortunate family, when their father is led to execution.

Lavater, the famous Swiss writer, preacher, and patriot, commissioned Chodowieski to make many designs for his celebrated "Essay on Physiognomy." In his work Lavater endeavored to show that there exists an intimate relation between a man's soul and his outer countenance, and that character could be detected in the expression of the face. Lavater had made a careful study of faces of living persons and from likenesses, and reduced his observations of expression to a regular system. The faces of the great men of his time and of the past were reviewed, and their characters explained. Christ's physiognomy and character were treated with much faith and enthusiasm. Chodowieski furnished a series of admirable engravings showing the life of Jesus from his birth to his death.

The struggle of the American people for independence was watched with intense interest by the nations of Europe. This was especially true of Germany, where the great Frederick openly showed his sympathy for Washington and his little band.



CHODOWIESKI SKETCHING TWO FRIENDS.



BENJAMIN FRANKLIN BEFORE THE KING OF FRANCE.

A Calendar, entitled "The Historic Calendar of Genealogy," which appeared at Leipzig in 1784, contained an article, "The History of the Revolution in North America, by M. C. Sprengel," with twelve engravings by Chodowieski. These engravings are not of Chodowieski's best, but are interesting for their peculiar conception. His knowledge of American life, manners, and customs seemed to have been somewhat indefinite and obscure, for he shows this when he represents the patriots at Lexington with halberds in their hands, as did the Swiss peasantry who fought for their liberty at Morgarten.

Chodowieski's fame spread far and wide, and it was with great difficulty that he could meet the demands of the booksellers for drawings and engravings for books and almanacs. He was a man of indomitable energy and industry. Often he worked until early in the morning, and frequently went to

sleep without undressing, so that when he awoke he could continue his labors. A large alarm clock was in his room to wake him in the morning. When friends came to visit him he received them kindly, but continued his work. Unremitting in all his efforts, his sole object was to reach the highest possible perfection ; and if he did not attain it, it must not be forgotten that the deficient instruction of his youth was a great drawback in his career.

The title of "German Hogarth," which he sometimes received, was the effect of an admiration more imaginative than critical. He had, in common with Hogarth, the vivid representation of life and manners, but no tendency towards the grotesque. Scarcely a book appeared which did not have his vignette. He illustrated the works of many of the world's greatest writers—Richter, Schiller, Goethe, Lessing, Voltaire, Shakespeare, Rousseau, Goldsmith, Richardson, Sterne, Ariosto, Cervantes, and many others. He was well read in history, and gave in his illustrations a true representation of the manners and customs of the time to which they related.

"Our excellent Chodowieski," says Goethe, "represented many scenes of the barbarity and depravity of his time ; but he also pictured many amiable scenes of the brighter side of life."



LANDING OF THE FRENCH ARMY.



CHODOWIESKI IN THE MIDST OF HIS FAMILY.